

Downtown Business District
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 27, 2016
330 Main Street, Middletown, CT

Attendees

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Mike Lukanik (Police Department)
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	Jeff Pugliese (Chamber of Commerce)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Tom Marano (Planning Department)
Peter Harding (Commissioner)	Laura Conley (Sweet Harmony Café)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Pamela Steele (Pamela Roose Specialty Yarns)
Mike DiPiro (Commissioner)	Matt Lefebvre (Middlesex Music Academy)
Mary Ann Perrotti (Commissioner)	Lisa Melaven (DBD Office)
Valerie Scribano (Commissioner)	

Minutes

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve
- 2nd by Val Scribano
- Minutes accepted

Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro

Mike reports we have approximately \$103,000 in our checking account. The Tax Collector's office will be finishing up with collections this month, and we should be able to ask for our 2nd installment next month in February. We continue to be under budget and our snowflake obligations have been met.

- Motion to approve by Jennifer Alexander
- 2nd by Marc Levin
- Treasurer's Report accepted.

Chair Update – Diane Gervais

Gift Cards: All is fairly quiet, the machine at the chamber is not functioning and in need of replacement, we have requested a new one.

We continue to have minor hiccups with businesses, as they neglect to train employees and/or change their credit card systems and neglect to notify us, so that we can update them to continue to accept the cards. We continue to reach out and follow up on any issues.

Holiday Lighting: The new lighting was very positively received, heard so many positive comments from the public and our businesses. I have already spoken with Downtown Decorations and they are preparing a proposal for new cross street decorations for next year, and I anticipate having a meeting on this sometime in February. With the move to a winter theme the plan was to keep the décor of the snowflakes on Main Street up and lit through the winter months to brighten the downtown. Unfortunately some signals got crossed and the snowflakes are being removed this week. We will need to work this out better for next year.

Holiday on Main Street gift bag promotion: This went well, and was very well received by downtown visitors. I would like to explore ways to improve this next year, with some cleaner form of promotion for the downtown businesses...instead of separate handouts, perhaps a booklet format created by us, including DBD businesses. We will need to think on this a bit.

Beautification: We are in a holding pattern until spring! As our current vendor struggled with the winter planting, we will be looking at having a different vendor handle the winter look for next year.

Marketing: Our Commercials are set to begin again shortly and we have them scheduled to run through June. We will have to edit and add to one of them as one of the businesses has announced that they are closing.

Budget: We need to have set our budget for the next fiscal year. I would like to have a budget discussion meeting next Wed 9am-10am here. Commissioners, please review this past year's budget and bring any thoughts on changes to this meeting.

Annual meeting: Lisa will be working with the Tax Collectors office to update our information and have it ready for our Annual meeting. We are beginning work on our year in review document today, and will have that ready to go out with our annual meeting packet for our March meeting. We are also working on the bylaws update, (notes from our prior meeting being turned into updated bylaws) and will have that for the board to approve, so that that can be a part of our Annual meeting packet as well.

Maintenance Report – Tom Ford

None

Police Report – Mike Lukanik (Police Department)

Mike reports there is a problem with the City and the police department receiving emails from the DBD.

Lisa will contact Rosa Perichi, secretary to the Chief of police at the MPD to remedy the situation.

Things have been fairly quiet downtown, with the exception of the Liberty bank robbery.

The police department did a great job responding and handling the situation. The suspect was apprehended/arrested without incident.

There has been better effort in seeing beat officers in and out of the downtown businesses, arcade parking lot and the north end.

Mike reports the Richmond group has been receptive and proactive on the driveway/alley behind the Shlein's building.

The Richmond group and the owner of the building are looking to improve the safety/security of the building.

They are also looking to install cameras, LED lighting, fencing, plantings and signage to improve the ecstastic side of things by May 1st.

Jen Alexander mentioned there is graffiti on the Railroad Bridge and billboard that needs to be cleaned up.

Public Works – William Russo

None

Parking Report - Geen Thazhampallath

None

Planning – Tom Marano

Tom reports he will be setting up a meeting to kick off the "buy local" campaign, hoping to reach out to the Middletown community including the Westlake area.

The Downtown Business and Community Guide is in draft form and on its way to the printers. If anyone (business) is considering on placing an advertisement in the guide, please see Tom.

New signage in the harbor park area (exit 15) will be forthcoming in promoting the downtown area.

TIF (Tax Incremental Fundraising) Investments – Tom has offered to help business owners to understand how the process works.

Chamber of Commerce – Jeff Pugliese

- The Chamber of Commerce will be hosting their 32nd Auction and Taste of Downtown on Tuesday, March 29th at the Italian Society. All proceeds will go towards next years' "Holiday on Main".
- Larry McHugh will be having a meeting with the property owners from the Washington to Court Street block on Monday, February 22nd. There will be discussion on the pedestrian walkway and parking lot to the Holy Trinity Church.
- Legislative session begins next week.
- Business After Work is on Monday, February 8th at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel in Rocky Hill from 5:00-7:00. This is a great networking event!

New Business –

Val Scribano from Middle Oak reports:

1. Middle Oak has signed a new lease with Ct. Associates of Health Care Facilities with 4 employees.
2. Arcadis and its 43 employees will be leaving downtown Middletown in September as they consolidated their Middletown and Manchester offices.
3. Tom has signed letters of intent with three new businesses that will bring approximately 95 employees into the downtown area. They are waiting on lease signings before announcing the names.

National paint is temporarily closed and in search of a smaller location.

Sandra James Boutique will be officially closed on January 30th.

- Motion to adjourn by Marc Levin
- 2nd by Mary Ann Perrotti
- Approved

